

Sorrow

An Eldritch Tale

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Coming Soon...

Contents

Introduction	4
The game is played in two ways:	5
Missions	5
Crossroad Events.....	5
The Project Goals	6
The first goal:	6
The second goal:	6
Creating a Character	7
Your Role in Sorrow: An Eldritch Tale	8
Shades	9
The Out World	10
Color.....	10
Curse of Pacifism	10
Indirect Violence	11
The Mist	11
The Signal	11
Food	12
Love and Distraction	13
Sexual Interaction	13
Pregnancy.....	13
Magic.....	14
Primal Magic/Sorcery.....	14
Eldritch Magic /Conjuring	14
Out World Ideologies	14
The Path of Pages.....	14
The Path of Shade	14
The Path of Nature.....	14
The Path of Technology	15
The Path of Acceptance	15
Looting	15
Theft.....	16

Soul Points.....	16
Rules.....	17
The Big Rules.....	17
Big Rule #1.....	17
Big Rule #2.....	17
Big Rule #3.....	17
Big Rule #4.....	17
Big Rule #5.....	17
Big Rule #6.....	18

Introduction

Sorrow an Eldritch Tale is a live action free form horror game set in a dark reflection of the present day. The player steps into the role of a character who struggles to survive horrific external and internal conflict, locked in a world filled with enemies and obstacles.

The game world has undergone a cataclysmic event known as the Divide which separated the known world into two parallel realms. The first realm is known only as Sorrow; this realm can be seen from the other and mirrors the current real world. Through the eyes of the player, the Shades that inhabit Sorrow—either Non-Player Characters (NPCs) or people not playing the game—are always grey in color.

The second realm, Out World, is where the remainder of humanity is forced to reside. It occupies the same space as Sorrow, but is apart from it. Out Worlders can see into Sorrow, but can only interact with certain objects within it. Interacting with the wrong kind can attract Seekers, beings that constantly track down and drive humans mad. Seekers are Shades conscious of their form and the divide between the worlds. Some Seekers are always bent on the destruction of humanity, while others exist only temporarily. The latter revert to Shade form when they have satisfied or been foiled in their murderous intent. Who or what controls the Shades and the Seekers is a mystery, if indeed they are being controlled at all.

Any realms which exist beyond these two are unknown.

The game is played in two ways:

Missions

Missions tend to be anywhere from 1 – 4 hours in length and are completely dependent upon player request. Using multi-media storytelling tools, our experience designers create individual or small group Missions that can be completed between Crossroad events. These Missions grant rewards to players through items, mental bonuses, or knowledge of the game world. Missions can be setup for any number of reasons, whether to pursue specific items, scavenge supplies, meet with a contact or lead, pursue a line of investigation on a specific subject or perhaps something grander like determining the cause and nature of the Divide.

A list of Missions will be made available and players can request a mission if one to their liking is not listed. Contact your local chapter to book a mission.

Crossroad Events

These can range from 4 - 6 hours and are usually held at venues such as parks, churches, halls or private intersections are secured and events are posted with out of game notification either through social media or a chapter's website.

Humans in the Out World mostly live separate lives, because having more than 4 Out Worlders in close proximity will attract the attention of Seekers. The exception to this is when Out Worlders congregate at a Crossroads: the point where two roads, trails, lines of power or tracks intersect. It is unknown why such areas temporarily shield Out Worlders from the watchful eye of the Seekers, but thus far they have been effective barriers for short periods of time.

“Crossroads” has become the term for a gathering of Out Worlders. These gatherings provide opportunities to trade materials and information, to switch groups, to form relationships, to experiment in ways to dull the misery of the Out World.

The most important reason for any Crossroads is to share new information about the nature of the Divide, or Seekers. Whether this information is based on a theory, experience, or indisputable proof, they are the ultimate reason for the public forum held at every Crossroad event. It is assumed everyone is attempting to figure out the answers to these questions, as most believe understanding is the first step to reversing what has happened to their world and their loved ones. It's up to you to decide if your character agrees.

Nexus points—where two lines of primal powers cross, commonly found at religious sites such as churches and graveyards—can also function as Crossroads.

The Project Goals

The first goal: To create a game that not only gives players choice in their actions, but a game that is collaborative storytelling at its heart.

The second goal: To raise awareness of live gaming and interactive theatre. Most Missions will involve playing in the public eye, and you can help us engage prospective players by handing out “I’m Playing a Game” business cards, wearing character badges telling people you are playing a game, and erecting signage at static sites.

Creating a Character

To participate in the Eldritch Tale you must first create a character. This character can be you, or it could be someone completely made up. The only exception is we don't allow players to impersonate real people (other than you playing yourself), so no stepping into game as real world celebrity look-alikes. Once you have a concept, we always suggest players take at least a few minutes to write down a backstory for their character.

This backstory should be 1 - 10 pages, and the player should take time to answer some of the following questions and any others that may be useful when defining their character.

- What did they do in Sorrow
- Did they have a family or significant other?
- If so, how did losing that family or loved one affect your character?
- What are your character's insecurities?
- What is your character really good at?
- With which, if any, gender does your character identify?
- What is the sexual orientation of your character?
- Does your character have an accent?
- What are your character's mannerisms?
- How does your character dress?
- When did your character cross over into the Out World?

These are just some of the questions to consider when making a free form character. Write down the answers and make sure the plot team has a copy of your backstory, so we can work together to create a collaborative story that begins with you.

We recommend new players attend a meet-up or pre-game Free Form Workshop to practice with their character and learn a few tips and techniques that are utilized in free form games. When you feel ready, it is time to step into your first full event or, if you prefer, attempt your first Interactive Module. Event styled games will start with a quick orientation and logistics period followed by a short exercise to get the creative juices flowing and to help everyone get into character. When the event ends we will have a short debriefing session.

Your Role in Sorrow: An Eldritch Tale

The Divide sundered the world into two parallel realms. You, the player, are stepping into the role of a character that has only recently gone from being a Shade in Sorrow to being a human in the Out World through a process known as rebirth or gaining color. To those in the Out World seeing this the Shade starts to show flecks of color then it builds within the Shade usually over a period of hours as the shade begins to gain awareness of what he or she is losing as those around them begin to ignore them and act as if they never existed, very slowly they pass from one realm to the next.

Your character knows when this rebirth happened, but they have no idea how. When it occurs and they transition they become scared and overwhelmed by a sense of loss. Most characters in the game world don't survive this process, driven to hysteria and madness by the magnitude of loss they feel, most of those arriving in the Out World quickly take their own lives.

Your character—whether through faith, force of will or perhaps even divine intervention—survived this initial despair. All player created characters have existed within the Out World for at least one month, so they know a little about their world having had time to get his or her bearing.

The final thing worth mentioning about the game world is the City in which we live is unnamed. No one actually knows where we are anymore. All that is known is no one can travel further from the City than about 10 miles past the small towns and cities existing around it (though these surrounding small towns and cities are considered to be part of 'The City' in this setting). Any real world signage bearing the City's real world name is considered to be illegible in game.

For more information about the boundaries of your game, speak with your chapter.

Shades

Regardless of what you thought when you existed within Sorrow, what you really were to Out Worlders is a Shade. When you become a resident of Out World you remember your life in Sorrow including the times you became a seeker and fed upon those in Out World, you don't know exactly what you fed on you just remember that when you did it usually generated a feeling akin to 'this is going to be a good day' when you resumed Shade form.

A Shade is simply an inhabitant of Sorrow that appears grey. They go about their lives, living as your character did before being born into the Out World. For most Out Worlders seeing these beings reinforces their feelings of loss. They see these former loved ones as untouchable, unaware creatures going about a life that those in the Out World left behind. ,

Three things can cause an immediate transformation from Shade to Seeker:

1. Physically touching a Shade with any part of your body.
2. Using any object under your direct force (anything from a thrown rock to the bullets of an AK-47) to touch or attack a Shade.
3. Speaking or interacting in any way with a Shade, especially one you knew during your existence in Sorrow.

The reaction is immediate and the seemingly normal grey human transforms into a beast from your wildest nightmares. If you look upon this form, it causes the aforementioned overwhelming madness, but all is not lost. To escape you can run for a crossroads, destroy the Shade if you know how (via magic or physical means), or close your eyes hide your face and hope the Seeker isn't very hungry.

Seekers are always on the prowl for Out Worlders, and some will actively hunt you. They have been known to pursue their target tirelessly until their victim falls upon the ground their life essence completely drained by the pursuit. Should they catch their prey, Seekers can Soul feed with a single touch.

Other types of Shades exist, waiting to be discovered.

The Out World

As stated above, the Out World is the second realm created in the Divide. The most obvious way to tell you're in the Out World and not Sorrow is that certain objects will be grey, while colored objects either exist in both worlds or specifically within the Out World. This will be denoted by items in outworld having a chapter specific sticker on them, speak with your chapter about what the sticker looks like.

The Out World also has an overwhelming sense of hopelessness. In order to survive most Out Worlders have taken up the banner of an all-consuming cause, or found someone to love and believe in so deeply that it can counter this hopelessness on a day to day basis, though these are just examples and other options exist.

Most believe the answer to the Divide is out there. They believe there is some reason for Sorrow, that their current state is a test or a puzzle that needs to be solved, and through investigation and cooperation the answer will be found.

Food is another issue in Out World. While going hungry is a fact of life for Out Worlders, most can obtain enough food to survive and stave off the soul draining effects of starvation. An abundance of food is a rarity and can reportedly reverse the effects soul draining

Color

Recognizing what you should interact with and what you should leave alone is the first survival tip for anyone living in the Out World. For instance, most food items are grey which means they are of little value to Out Worlders. While grey food can be eaten, it does nothing to prevent or alleviate hunger or restore ones soul.

Shades are also always grey, as are numerous items one should avoid contact with to avoid summoning Seekers.

"Scavenging colors" is a term used by Out Worlders to describe hunting for valuable colored items which exist either in both realms or entirely in the Out World. Any item that bears a chapter specific sticker is known to be colored and any item that does not is considered to be grey, this includes stationary objects, technological devices or even plant life.

Curse of Pacifism

Out Worlders are unable to commit direct violence on any living creature, Shades or growing plants. If such violence is attempted, not only does it fail, it immediately summons a cadre of Seekers to the area.

When someone has their soul drained fully in Out World they return to Sorrow. But if someone physically dies in Out World they stay truly dead and are never again seen in Out World or Sorrow.

Indirect Violence

Since your character cannot intentionally do violence to someone, some creativity is required to dispatch friends or foes. You could poison 1 of 5 cups of wine, and mix the cups up until you had no idea which one had the poison in it—the problem being that you could not offer a cup to your guest, as you know there is a chance they could die. Nor would you let them drink should they attempt to take a glass. But if you should step away, and the guest should take a drink...

We encourage you to come up with your own ways of operating around the Curse of Pacifism. Contact your local chapter if you would like to discuss the compatibility of your ideas with the game's mechanics.

The Mist

The Mist is the area that exists around the City. The world seems to drop off, and no one is sure what happens to those who venture into this ghostly shroud, as no one has ever returned from it.

The Signal

The internet, text messaging, cell phones, computers and other types of technology still exist and even in the Out World you are able to use them. Out Worlders often use these items to their advantage by creating coded phrases, fake accounts and methods to keep in contact with one another. They must resort to such secrecy, because the continuous signal produced by such devices can allow Seekers to locate the source.

In an out of game sense it is the players responsibility to provide physical representations to access these items, though internet and/or devices may also be provided at various events.

Food

Having no real use for money, Out Worlders have substituted food as hard currency. The higher the calorie content the more the item of food is worth. Nutrition obviously still plays a part, but ingesting 2,000 calories of color marked food will restore one soul point.

Food is marked with stickers to denote which food is colored, therefore can be used for trading purposes or filed at end of game to restore a soul point, and which food is grey. Check with your local chapter to determine what your sticker looks like, so you can easily identify both colored and grey food. As a new character in Out World, you have been able to scavenge and begin with 2000 calories worth of colored food.

It is assumed that characters in Out World can scavenge enough food between Crossroad events to survive. It is also of note that it seems impossible for someone in Out World to starve to death though going for long periods of time without eating, seems to be a good way to attract the attention of Seekers.

It is also important to note that all in game food needs to be physically represented with a non-perishable food item. At the end of each Crossroads event we will have a donation box available if you wish to give these non-perishable food items to people in need. Seek out the specific information on where this food will be donated from your local chapter. .

Love and Distraction

It is rare for those with close ties in Sorrow to enter the Out World with their loved ones, making the transition extremely hard on anyone in this situation. Though should someone find love in the Out World, they have found someone to help bear a large part of the burden.

Falling in love is having a rock in a world full of tidal waves. To represent your newfound stability, characters in a Plot-approved relationship will have their Soul Point totals combined; however, this connection also means that when one has their soul depleted so will the other. If you are interested in starting a relationship in game as part of your collaborative story, or if you wish to remain in your current real world relationship in game, please speak with Plot and inform them of your intent.

Example: Ben and Jane decide that they fall in love in the game world and as such their individual Soul Point totals go from 5 and 5 respectively to 10 as a total. Now if Ben loses all 10 Soul Points to Seekers or through other actions then both Ben and Jane would be returned to the realm of Sorrow, resuming their previous lives.

Distraction worthy pastimes can also help eliminate hopelessness and give strength to the soul. Recreational sports, games, sex or other activities can have a positive effect on characters' mental faculties.

These effects will be determined case by case based on collaborative storytelling and the direction of your character. Some activities will restore Soul Points, others may help steel your character for the horrors to come with temporary bonuses. However, it must be remembered that group activities of humans in the Out World may also attract the notice of Seekers.

Sexual Interaction

Sexual activity in this game is simulated by the two (or more, potentially) involved parties touching one another's hands and arms. Generally, touching on the hands and forearms will symbolize kissing and mild touching, advancing higher up the arm will portray full body caressing, and the top of the arms and shoulders will denote penetrative or oral sex. Any one arm caress doesn't necessarily translate to any specific action in this method, only the approximate stage on the "sexual scale" to which the interaction has advanced. Gentler hand and arm touching should be used for gentler interactions, while rougher ones should be used for more forceful encounters. Be mindful not to physically hurt another player while performing this method –the idea is to provide a safe simulation of sexual contact.

Pregnancy

If you wish your female character to get pregnant after engaging in role-played sexual activity, please inform Plot of your intent. Any character that is pregnant in the Out World instantly has their Soul Point total doubled. Once the child is born the mothers Soul Point total will return to her normal amount.

Should the child be lost, the shock to the mothers Soul becomes almost unbearable. To represent this occurrence the Mother's soul point total is set to only half the normal amount for a period of time equal to the number of months that it would have taken to carry the child to term.

Magic

When the Divide separated the realms it also brought magic back to the world, but as with all great power this magic comes at a price.

Primal Magic/Sorcery

This magic focuses on the primal forces of nature, whether animals or the elements. It is extremely difficult to cast and learn and can cost the character their humanity if misused. How to master and build the inner power to cast a Primal spell can be found on Earthen Tablets, which started to appear in the natural world shortly after the Divide.

Eldritch Magic /Conjuring

This magic seems to use the power of Sorrow itself; it comes from a tome known as the Grand Grimoire. A vision of this book was seen by many during the Divide. The tome was torn to pieces, its pages flung wide as the sky turned from blue to grey. Simply looking at a page can drain ones Soul, but those strong of will can learn the magic taught by the Grimoire and use the Shades' power against them. Some say conjurers can even learn to summon and control Seekers.

Out World Ideologies

To assist with some role-playing start points, listed here are the five major ideologies, also known as Paths, espoused by Out Worlders. Each Path considers the Divide and how to fix it, bringing the realms back together. There are many other ideologies, including any you wish to create, in the Out World, though they are less popular.

The Path of Pages

The Book Binders believe the truth of what happened that fateful day can be discovered only by collecting and rebinding all pages of the Grand Grimoire. They fervently believe reading it aloud cover to cover will unite the realms. The Book Binders have proven to be a great asset in the destruction of Seekers, though some of their numbers invariably perish in the attempt.

The Path of Shade

Haunters believe the only way to know what happened to the world the day of the Divide is to try to determine everything they can about Shades. This group is known to do strange experiments with Shades, including hauntings: the manipulation of objects around Shades. This experiment actually proved that Shades can also be driven mad. Haunters tend to have the highest madness and fatality rates of the five Paths.

The Path of Nature

Believing only the natural world can show us the way to discover the truth. Druids seek to learn the why of the Divide. Their beliefs conflict with those of the Path of Pages; Druids believe the reconstruction of the Grand Grimoire is a fool's errand. The Druids believe in gathering information from Earthen Tablets and meditation techniques gleaned from shape shifting into the primal forces. They believe through the perfection of one's self transcendence will occur, and the transcended will reach "the Eye of the Storm", a nirvana-like state where the illusion of the realms melt away into true existence. Many of their

number speak of Druids who have reached this state, but this has gone unconfirmed. What is confirmed is many on this Path tend to lose themselves and their humanity, suffering through a final shape change, locked in their primal form .

The Path of Technology

The answer is already out there in the signal or on a forgotten hard drive. Technomancers spend a lot of time searching from computer system to computer system, online and offline for the cause and remedy of the Divide. They believe the realms are one big program, and there's a bug. Trying to decrypt the source code of YouTube videos, or looking for hidden meaning in social media and local news posts is common place for the followers of this path. They tend to be the ones to find new people emerging from Sorrow, doing their best to help them get on their feet and get to their first safe crossroads, all the while spouting conspiracy theories.

The Path of Acceptance

Givers think their residence in Out World was caused by a divine being. Perhaps it was Ragnarok or Revelation-- the cause only matters to the individual. The unifying belief of Givers is existence in the Out World is meant to be, and we must accept it. Givers believe the world is ending, and they are simply waiting for judgement. . They have discovered little, and seem content in their acceptance that the Divide was either meant to be, or it was the punishment of a just god; the answer will be provided in time. Givers are so named because they are often capable of saintly acts in an attempt to better their station with whatever angry deity or power has led them to the Out World. This Path seems to be the most popular.

Looting

Sorrow's mechanics try to be as realistic as possible when it comes to scavenging and looting, so in this game you have 2 options for looting.

The first is someone actually going through your pockets, taking off your boots and looking for items. This method should only be completed when it is safe to do so (don't take off someone's boots when they're in the snow) and the looted party has given their consent.

The second method is for those that don't want someone rummaging through their pockets: a descriptive search. With a descriptive search the person doing the looting asks location questions and the person being looted retrieves any items from that location and gives them to the searcher. Items must physically be stored in these locations to reflect reality, so if a looter successfully searches a mark's underpants, the person being looted must reach into his or her underwear to get the item.

Theft

The only items that can be taken from another character are items marked with a chapter sticker or tag. If you take an item with either of these markers please see Plot at your first opportunity and report the in game theft (bring the physical representation of the item with its tag to Plot). Plot will then go to the target of the theft and ask if they would like their physical representation returned to them. If they do, the former owner loses all chance to recognize the stolen item in game; however, if they prefer the thief to continue to use the stolen item's physical representation. The phys-rep will be returned to the thief until the game has ended, and the target can continue to recognize it in game if they should see it.

Soul Points

Each character in Sorrow starts the game with 5 Soul Points. Losing Soul Points is magically damaging to a player's psychological and/or physical well-being and it is up to the player to determine the proper way to role-play the degradation of the soul.

In most cases this 'degradation' is attributed to temporary damage to the Id or the physical body of the character and eventually can be healed within the game either with time, help, medicine, food, character growth, magic or other methods.

Should a Character ever reach a negative Soul Point total then they will spend some time roleplaying through the transition from colored to grey. It is the player's choice how long this takes and how they wish to play out this return to Sorrow.

For every Crossroad event survived in Out World, your character gains 1 Soul Point. There are also items and effects which can be found in Sorrow at Cross Road Events, or Missions that can either increase or decrease a character's Soul Point total.

Rules

The Big Rules

Big Rule #1

If at any point the role-playing becomes too intense or distressful for you as a player, you are, without consequence, able to go out of game to remove yourself from the situation. In such a case, speak to a member of Plot, and they will inform you when the situation has passed.

Big Rule #2

HOLD: If at any point you are injured, feel as if you're being pressured into an uncomfortable situation, yet are too distressed to step out of game, or are in any other situation that you feel warrants the action to be stopped, take in a deep breath and call out "HOLD!" at the top of your lungs. At this time, everyone within hearing distance should cease all action, freezing the game. Once the situation is resolved the person who called the hold or a member of Sorrow's production team may resume the game by calling "Lay On 1, Lay On 2, Lay On 3".

FIRST AID: If you require assistance due to an injury, call out "First Aid" at the top of your lungs after the HOLD call. A certified First Aider will be sent to your location to assist.

CAUTION: It is important that people try to call their own holds at all times—it is a big immersion break and should be used only when required. Sometimes people will fall, dive or stumble and be fine. If they are injured they will call their own hold unless they are obviously unable to, in which case you may call one on their behalf. A good rule of thumb is when you go "holy shit..." and are about to call a hold – give it a three count. If the person is fine, play on. If the person is still down or something is wrong shout out "HOLD" and ensure they get assistance as quickly as possible.

Big Rule #3

Imbibing alcohol at non-alcohol live events, using illegal drugs or substances, or breaking any out of game law (such as going through someone's out of game bag or committing vandalism to the site) will be met with immediate suspension or banning. Authorities will also be informed if appropriate. Out of game bags need to be marked with a white ribbon or white tape to show they are out of game.

Big Rule #4

If you come to a Sorrow event, you will be in game the entire time you are at the event. If you go out of game for extended periods of time without a plot member's approval (usually only granted in cases of injury or sickness) a violation could be issued. If you need to go out of game, speak with your Plot team and inform them of the situation. This precaution also ensures that we know if and when you are leaving the site, so we don't mistakenly call the police to help look for you.

Big Rule #5

Sorrow is a game. As such, it should be fun most of the time. We're not saying it won't be hard sometimes or frustrating at others but, overall, the enjoyable aspects of the community and game should far outweigh those negative moments. Keep the experiences of your character separate from

yourself as a player (as much as possible) – playing your character through a difficult time in their life should ideally not cause the player distress.

If you find that the experiences of your character are starting to ‘bleed’ into your personal life, please contact us or someone you trust to speak with them about steps you can take to ensure the game has a positive effect on your personal life. The game can be intense, but in the end we all have lives to live, and we at Tall Tale want to ensure they are as unlike Sorrow as possible.

Big Rule #6

It is key that we always remember Sorrow is a game. While it can get intense at times, we are all friends who strive to create a living and breathing world rife with horror, treasure, pleasure and beauty. Anyone acting to ruin the out of game pleasure of other participants—whether at an event, on the forums, or through social networking sites—will immediately suffer a suspension, ban and possibly legal action. This rule also encompasses cheating; any intentional cheating will result in a rules violation which can lead to suspension or banning.